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ing us forever, and lamenting Columbus hadn't gone to the bottom of the sea, instead of discovering America: talking of reform from July to eternity, and asking folks if they don't hope they may get it.

The Saturday Press Book-List.

For the week ending April 14, 1860.

NEW BOOKS.

AMERICAN.

THE LIVING REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR. By John Jay. 1 vol. 12mo. pp. 323. Philadelphia: Childs & Johnson.

THE HISTORY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR. By John Jay. 1 vol. 12mo. pp. 323. Philadelphia: Childs & Johnson.

HISTORICAL.

THE HISTORY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR. By John Jay. 1 vol. 12mo. pp. 323. Philadelphia: Childs & Johnson.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE HISTORY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR. By John Jay. 1 vol. 12mo. pp. 323. Philadelphia: Childs & Johnson.

ENGLISH.

THE HISTORY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR. By John Jay. 1 vol. 12mo. pp. 323. Philadelphia: Childs & Johnson.

RELIGIOUS.

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BIOGRAPHICAL.

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HISTORICAL.

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TRAVELS.

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D. APPLETON & CO., NEW YORK.

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The N. Y. Saturday Press.

HENRY CLAPP, JR., EDITOR.

NEW YORK, APRIL 14, 1860.

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N. B.—Applications should be made before Friday, the 20th inst.

THE POEMS OF EDMUND C. STEDMAN.

Mr. Stedman's volume comes to us from the publishing-house of Mr. Charles Scribner, of this city. It contains a large number and variety of lyrical and idyllic poems, most of which are now printed for the first time. The mechanical execution of the book is tasteful and elegant.

A short Preface, somewhat apologetic in character, introduces the reader to this collection of poems. In this regard Mr. Stedman has made a singular and not an unusual mistake. The Preface is generally a bore. To a volume of poems it is almost invariably a nuisance. As a rule, it creates distrust in the mind of the reader, and it creates distrust in the mind of the reader.

Poetry needs no apology. It has an authentic claim to recognition, a claim founded in its merits. On those merits it must be judged. Neither apology nor explanation can palliate its faults; and when its beauties are not apparent of themselves, it is cruel to disturb their serene obscurity.

We here present Mr. Stedman's Preface, not simply as illustrating an error of taste, but because, by the merest accident, it in some sense justifies our judgment of his character and position as a writer of poems.

"This volume is mostly composed of such productions, as have somewhat borne the tests of time and review—to which they have been subjected by the author, in the earnest desire to prefer his art before himself. If they exhibit too great variety of purpose, it is because he has not been able, at any one period, during the last few years, to prepare enough matter to offer in present form. What has been done is the result of unequal moments, saved from the daily task-work, which must first be met by every true man on whom it is imposed. Except a few old-fashioned pieces, classed as 'The Tribune Lyrics,' these poems are now for the first time in type. One of the 'exceptions' referred to, and by no means in accordance with the author's own standard, has been inserted from deference to a public sentiment, which received it kindly when it first appeared."

We respect Mr. Stedman's earnest desire to prefer his art before himself—and in sympathy with that desire—we judge his book in the light of severe criticism.

It may safely be presumed that a man of culture and experience who publishes a volume of poems, will rather choose to be judged as a man of culture and experience, than to be trifled with as a youth and simpleton, or nauseated with frivolous compliment.

What such a man desires, is not popular applause, but recognition. If he sincerely believes himself a Poet, he will wait with patience the inexorable justice of time. If he appreciates the sublimity of his aspiration, he will also appreciate the severity of his ordeal.

In regard to new poems as they issue from the Press, the question for the critic inevitably is, whether their author is or is not a Poet. It is, for all parties interested, a very important question.

Poems are written by two kinds of persons—those who are poets, and those who are not. Technically speaking, nobody but a poet can write a poem. But we cannot afford to be technical. Poetry is written only by poets, and there is very little of it written anywhere at the present time. Poems, however, are written by a great number of cultivated persons all over the world, and written in large quantities.

Now it is the business of the critic to discriminate between these two kinds of writers, awarding to the true poet a just recognition, and saving him from the somewhat sacrilegious society of miscellaneous warblers.

The difficulty of this task is readily appreciable. It is also apparent that it must be performed conscientiously or not performed at all.

Our own process is a very simple one. We believe that poetry is the visible interpretation of infinite beauty; that it concerns the beautiful, alike in the universe of matter and of mind; that nobody but a poet can write poetry; that nobody is a poet who has not genius; that genius is a celestial gift, and not a cultivated equipment; that the test of genius is inspiration; and that inspiration in poetry, though it may not be easily defined, is always easily recognized.

Reviewing the poetic literature of America according to this standard, it is safe to say there have not appeared six persons in this country who deserve to be called Poets.

On the contrary, many persons have courted public observation and applause, who, without being poets in any sense, yet insist on writing and publishing verses. Of these persons the inferior, uncultivated class, is composed of idiots merely, whose weak sentimentality and drivelling nonsense is by turns the sport and the contempt of all sensible readers. But the superior, cultivated class, comprises men and women refined in nature, developed by education and experience, possessing delicate taste and poetic sensibility, and who are altogether amiable and delightful.

To such writers as these last described, the production of verses—very good verses, too—is a labor indeed, but not a labor of any considerable difficulty. Mr. Stedman is to be classed with these writers. It does not seem to us that he is, in the high and true sense of the word, a Poet. He is an artist in verse—very felicitous and fortunate artist.

Accordingly the poems in this collection are, with few exceptions, cold and white as marble. They are artistic, alike in conception and in execution. They evince the culture of the scholar and the refinement of the gentleman. But they are never spontaneous. Nowhere is there any warmth of passion. Nowhere does the lightning of poetic inspiration radiate and vivify the classic structures of art. Nowhere is there any evidence of poetic genius.

It is further to be observed that Mr. Stedman, like many poetic artists popular in the present day, appears to be a student of models in art. By these he is often ineptly influenced in the construction of his poems. One of Mr. Stedman's models is Tennyson—a Poet as well as an artist. Thus the poem of "Penelope," which we reprint in another part of this paper, and which is excellent as a work of art, would probably never have been written but for a suggestion caught from the "Ulysses." That poem it resembles, but resembles (to borrow an illustration) thus: as the shell of the locust resembles the living locust. Thus the poems of "The Flood Tide," and "The Prophet," suggest the existence in the author's mind of a reminiscence of such poems as "Locksley Hall," and "The Gardener's Daughter." Thus "The Order of the Day," is a reminiscence of "The Order of the Day." And "The Order of the Day," is a reminiscence of "The Order of the Day."

And again, in the poem called "The Order of the Day," there is the tone and feeling peculiar to the poetry of Matthew Arnold.

We advance these illustrations, not because we desire to bring any charge of plagiarism or servility against Mr. Stedman, but because they strengthen our theory that the poetic artist inevitably copies these models, and that, seeming to him most excellent, are admired and studied with sympathy and admiration.

It may be remarked, by the way, that Mr. Stedman's poem of "The Order of the Day," is a reminiscence of "The Order of the Day."

poem of "Apollo" virtually expresses our own belief as to the inspiration of genius in poetry. For this reason we copy it here:

"Vahly, O burning Poet!
To wait for his inspiration,
Even as kings of old
Stood by the candle-pipe.
Hasten back, he will say, hasten back
To your provinces far away!
There, at my own good time,
Will I send my answer to you.
Are you not kings of time?
At last the God cometh!
The sun rises over with splendor:
The fire leaps high on the altar:
Melodious thunders shake the ground:
Hark to the Delphic responses!
Hark! It is the God!"

But notwithstanding our theories and convictions respecting Mr. Stedman's character and position as a writer of poems, we are glad to say that we have read his book with interest and with very great pleasure. We like it for its artistic excellence; for the aspiration it evinces, lofty and pure; for its sweet fancies, its thoughtful spirit, its tenderness of feeling, and its generally serene character and influence. And we like it because we sympathize with and reverence its embodiment—the aspiration of a human soul, struggling upward through the doubts and trials of life towards the realization of that perfect spiritual grandeur and peace which is the fulfillment of hope and the crown of all noble deeds.

THE ANNUAL EXHIBITION OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN.

The Annual Exhibition is neither strong in the number of pictures displayed, nor, we think, in their quality. There is no single work of marked importance, and hardly any artist has made decided advance on previous performance.

The most striking, and probably the best picture, is Leighton's Romeo and Juliet (241). It has genuine force of character and passionate expression, is a human and poetic study of high order, with faults as marked as its excellences. In the first English Exhibition, it was a very mixed and therefore unsatisfactory impression. The composition seems to us much marred by the opening through which the bustle of the festival is seen in the background. This by-play distracts attention, breaks the serious breadth of color as well as incident, and is, in effect, an affection or imitation of the antique treatment. The color is strong but ungraded. The local tint being given only in shadow, all draperies have a faded look, while in the darks we sink to a flat unmitigated depth with scarce perceptible form. So the truth of moderation and proportion is sacrificed to energy of effect, but no weakness or exaggeration of treatment should divert us from the vital intent of the artist. The effeminate beauty of Paris, the various grades of grief in the female figures, the numbness of the stricken old man, will go deeper than the eye. The work is worthy of serious and sympathetic study.

May exhibit (492) a very characteristic work. It has much rude vigor, but the type of character in the figure is not of general interest. They have at least the merit of freedom from sentimentality, from pretentiousness and pettiness. Their wild animalism is not far removed from coarseness. We feel the force of the picture, and admire not without many a reservation and doubt.

Johnson's work is all excellent of its kind, and only unimportant in comparison with his grand Festival and Italian girl of last year. He is strong even here in humor and homeliness, and has only a dangerous rival in himself. No. 610, a portrait, has great strength of form and expression.

The crayon heads of Barry have sentiment and emotion, without much individuality or strength of temperament and character. They seem, therefore, slightly unreal, without being positively—at least without being offensively—sentimental. His portraits of Ames and Whitaker, and, on the contrary, strongly individual, and have the best merit of portraiture, an intensification of the most quality of the subject.

Leconte, in 261, gives in a picture of which half (the left) is better than the whole. All the stage material does but divert attention from the central figure. He has by skilful employment of light and color made them almost produce the effect of character, but, as usual in his work, the picturesque element greatly predominates. His heroine is sainted in her glowing aureole, not in any resolution or elevation of thought. Beauty is thrown around the figure, not into the figure. It is strong, not in essential, but in adventitious qualities. Yet in these it is certainly very strong. The Battle Scene (578) has hardly his customary force of composition or execution. It is slightly confused, and lacks a commanding center.

The Queen Mary, by Lang, is not quite convincing. White's Girl at Prayer (189) interests rather by its simplicity than vigor, while the figure of the Sick Boy is coarsely painted, ugly and repulsive.

Lambdin contributes unpretending, carefully painted pictures, not very strong in any quality, but pleasing in their fidelity to the more elevated aspect of everyday life. In comparing Nos. 478 and 663, we are convinced that Mr. Lambdin should rely rather on incident rather than on domestic detail than on unadorned character. His faces lack life, and in expression border on the commonplace.

A single figure, by Green (306), seems to us very substantial in sentiment and character, as well as in execution.

The Jester, by Meyer (118), is strong at once and subtle in expression.

Cortis's very fresh in paint (181), and much more at home in a bear-hunt on the prairie, than in the Walk to Emmaus.

Sabin exhibits well-drawn portraits in black and white; see 124, in which strength and refinement are happily combined.

In landscape, Hubbard appears with much more than his usual material vigor, without loss of repose or depth of sentiment. His large work (471) is very commanding both in treatment and feeling. The mass of wood sweeping through the middle distance is especially grand. The foreground is admirably composed and very full of character without dryness of detail—the sky luminous without sacrifice of freshness.

Olford affords us nothing new. His largest work seems to us not his best. The mountain-form seems exaggerated both in size and precipitous ruggedness. If he were treated with more moderation, it would more improve the mind. See the mountain in 317, which, being smaller, is greater in its solidity and repose. In 361 and 407 we feel disagreeably a slight hardness of form and dryness of color in the foreground. His faults grow out of his merits. He sacrifices color and form to breadth and harmony of effect. His strength is in space and sunshine. No. 317 is perhaps the happiest effort of the year.

Heads are forcibly rendered (in No. 438) an effect not uncommon, of sunshine contrasted with gathering storm. The picture is very luminous and simple; it refreshes by its very courage and freedom from commonplace, by its homeliness. This work stands in contrast with that of the flowery or sentimental school.

Coleman and Shattuck exhibit this year more than their usual largeness of design, but neither is free from the old desire to embellish. Coleman has more feeling, Shattuck, perhaps (in No. 504), more material vigor without controlling sentiment. Their work will always be severely handled by true criticism, but must even accept the liking of the artist. It is genuine, however, it may seem wanting in marvellous elements. Coleman sticks to his own point of view, and doubtless sees as he paints, the mountain from a seat in the grass.

No. 647, by Berstadt, is not impressive in any proportion to the skill and labor bestowed on it. It greatly lacks unity both of material and motive. We cannot enjoy the mountain, grandly enough designed, for herds of wandering buffaloes and scattered trees. Berstadt has strong power of representation, with occa-

sional bursts of feeling, which seem yet not strong enough to melt together his perceptions. The poet does not control the painter in him, and his fine faculties are spent as yet somewhat at random.

Richards has gained something of freedom, softness, and suggestion, in his studies of undergrowth. George L. Brown is very unequal to himself in power. The old painters have a hand in much of his work, which smells of the studio; yet his actual studies from nature have great vigor. They are broad yet accurate, flowing and true in color; see for example No. 510. In No. 234 we find exemplified his strength and weakness. The sky is luminous, palliating, aerial; the foreground commonplace and imitative in the extreme. This work lacks not force, unless it be the force of refinement. His color is always strong, often crude, ungraded. He seems to possess power and skill not put to use, and we must even be content to be at once delighted and dissatisfied with his work.

No. 604, by Delemond, is a very suggestive and pleasing example of the French breadth of effect. It is a mere effect, but very cool, pure, and true.

Stone exhibits cabinet-portraits of genuine excellence; strong, refined, with individual and not merely picturesque quality, they are studies of character, and as such of interest to every visitor.

Mr. Huntington has painted very careful and effective portraits. No. 448 is every way excellent as a picture. This counterfeited note is not only good in its detail of material, but a clever and broad rendering

